No decision regarding privatisation of the working coal mines of Coal India Limited has been taken by the Government.

[English]

Foreign Trade With Russia

6629. SHRI SURESH PRABHU : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether volume of foreign trade between India and Russia is steadily on the decline;

(b) if so, whether this matter came up for discussion in the recent summit talks between the Hon'ble Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Hon'ble Prime Minister of India on his recent Moscow visit;

(c) if so, the details and the outcomes thereof; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken in order to correct the situation ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) No, Sir. The Indo-Russian trade increased in rupee terms by 44.6% and 54.3% during the years 1994-95 and 1995-96 respectively over the previous years. However, there has been a decline of 22.6% in rupee terms in the Indo-Russian trade during the period April-February 1996-97 over the corresponding period of previous year.

(b) and (c) Indo-Russian trade also came up for discussion during the talks between Prime Minister of India and the Russian President in March, 1997 in Moscow. During the meeting, it was acknowledged that the current volume of Indo-Russian trade turnover was not large, and steps are needed to be taken to increase it.

(d) Various steps have been initiated by the Government to arrest the decline and enhance the Indo-Russian trade. These steps include encouraging consignment sales and opening of warehouses, broadbasing the basket of tradable goods, signing of Agreement on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Customs, impressing upon Russian Federation for early allocation of rupee funds, opening of Indian banks, participation in trade fairs and exhibiions, enhancing the trade in the area of pharmaceuticals reduction of value addition norms from 100% to 75% in respect of certain hitech items including personal computers for export to Russia under the debt repayment route etc.

Transaction made by STC & MMTC

6630. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the trade undertaken by STC and MMTC during 1995-96 and 1996-97; and

(b) the profit/loss earned by STC and MMTC during the above years ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) and (b) Details of turnover achieved by STC & MMTC alongwith the profit earned during 1995-96 and 1996-97 are given below :-

(Value in Rs. Crore)

	Year	Turnover	Net profit
STC	1995-96	1685	22
	1996-97*	2317	44*
MMTC	1995-96	6224	52
	1996-97*	4678	55*

*(Provisional)

Captive Coal Blocks

6631. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received some representations from the independent power products who had been allotted captive coal blocks are now willing to give up the captive mines and go for cheaper coal supply from public sector coal companies;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether out of 47 blocks identified for captive operations, 24 blocks have been offered to the private sector and in only three or four blocks mining activities have been initiated; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Government to come out with some concrete fiscal incentives for private participation in this sector ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) and (b) M/s. Development Consultants Ltd., a private company who had been offered Chuperbita block in Rajmahal area of Eastern Coalfields Limited for captive consumption for power generation have declined the offer and submitted